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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7516th meeting
Monday, 31 August 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Casimiro
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I cannot begin my intervention without expressing, on behalf of the Chilean Government and on my own behalf, our most sincere condolences on the passing away of the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, Lieutenant General José Luiz Jaborandy, Jr. — to the Government of Brazil, to General Jaborandy's family and to the members of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. For those of us who were privileged to know and work with the General Jaborandy, we knew well of his leadership and his commitment to peace and security in Haiti. Yesterday we lost a great soldier of peace.

We congratulate you and your team, Madam President, for the outstanding conduct of the work of the Security Council during the month of August.

We appreciate this public wrap-up session, which is an important practice to continue. I should like to mention a few issues that we believe merit follow-up: the use of the veto, the process of the selection of the next Secretary-General, sexual and gender-based violence in conflict, and the unity of the Security Council with regard to the peace and non-proliferation agreements of recent months.

Unfortunately, in the month of July, the exercise of the right of the veto (see S/PV.7498) prevented the Council from adopting a product relating to the crime of genocide. We reiterate the call to the members of the Council who hold veto power to refrain from making use of it when it comes to war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide. We support the code of conduct proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group to those ends, and we hope that many other countries will join the initiative as well as similar ones in that vein.

We value the informal discussion of the Council on its working methods and the use of the veto — held during the presidency of New Zealand — as well as the consultations regarding the selection process of the Secretary-General, whether that be a man or a woman. With such openness and transparency, we expect that the Council will contribute harmoniously to the the taking of that decision within the General Assembly as well.

Regarding sexual violence and gender-based violence in conflict, on August 24 the United States of America and Chile co-chaired the first Security Council Arria Formula meeting on targeted attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. That meeting allowed for the gathering of first-hand information on issues of peace and security, including combating terrorism and protecting civilians belonging to vulnerable groups. The meeting also set a precedent on the issue not only in the Council but throughout the United Nations system, as evidenced by the high level of participation on the part of Member States and civil society.

The consultations we held with the Secretary-General on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by troops from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic served to highlight the need for contingents to receive training in human rights and for ensuring the strict enforcement of the zero-tolerance tolerance. That should be done while also ensuring that those responsible are brought to justice and that the victims are compensated and reintegrated. The system should adequately address that matter, with particular focus on the challenges faced by troop-contributing countries.

In addition to the information provided by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zainab Hawa Bangura on her visit to the Middle East, we have seen that sexual and gender-based violence must be addressed in the various reports of the Secretary-General to the Council, as well as in consultations — whenever necessary — and not solely in the framework of an open debate on the subject. One might add, as an additional thought, that gender advisers should be included in missions as a preventive measure, among others, to avoid the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war or terror.

The adoption of resolution 2231 (2015), on non-proliferation, and of resolution 2235 (2015), on

chemical weapons in Syria — as well as the treatment of South Sudan — shows that the Council can be effective if it acts in a unified and timely manner. The joint action exercised by the Council to decisively influence the signing of the agreement putting an end to the 20-month period of armed conflict in South Sudan is the most recent proof that, when there is willingness and a great deal of flexibility, it is possible to find a basis for agreement to deal with items on the agenda of the Council, even when legitimate differences may exist. That is the approach that we feel should be used to deal with other cases. The spirit of working constructively should prevail, so that the Council can assume its responsibility flowing from the Charter of the United Nations.

We feel that other issues dealt with over recent months have inded been very useful. However, we would like to suggest that "Other matters" should also include dynamic dialogues with briefers as well as penholders — before the expected product — in order to favour receiving information or an additional product over repetitive rhetoric.

Finally, we wish the Russian Federation every success in its presidency in September, and we reiterate our support and commitment to cooperate with the presidency in a constructive manner.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I want to begin, as Cristián did, by expressing condolences both to the leadership of the United Nations and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and to the Government of Brazil for the tragic death of General Jabornady of MINUSTAH.

I also want to echo what Cristián just said in thanking you, Joy, and your team for delivering a successful month of August. It was a busy month, but I think that, as President, you brought some welcome unity to the Council on several important issues, most notably on Syria.

I want to focus on three sets of issues today. First of all, I would like to use this session to reflect on our successes this month and on how we can build on them. Secondly, I will have a look at where we were unable to find agreement, including some of the events in July. And, finally, I will look back on our working methods and assess whether they delived as best they could.

This past month, the Council covered a wide breadth of issues: on the role of regional and subregional organizations in our work on international peace and security, on the importance of security-sector reform in sustainable peacebuilding and on the vital need to learn from last year's Ebola outbreak, recommitting to reaching a level of zero infections. I am pleased that under your presidency, Madam, you have continued to bring diverse issues such as those to the Council's attention. But it is this month's discussions on Syria that I want to focus on.

Resolution 2235 (2015), on the Joint Investigative Mechanism, represents a much-needed step towards accountability for the barbaric use of chemicals as weapons in Syria. For too long, the Council has been less effective than we would like in the face of continuing reports of the horrific use of chlorine and mustard gas against civilians. We look forward to the urgent implementation of the resolution in the coming weeks. Reports of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant using chemical weapons are worrying, and they must be investigated. But they do not make any better the Syrian regime's continued use of such weapons.

Through the presidential statement on the work of Special Envoy De Mistura (S/PRST/2015/15), the Council recommitted to a political solution in Syria based on the implementation of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex). That was the first united signal on that issue from the Council in 18 months. Those are two overdue steps. The disturbing attacks on Duma and the harrowing Arria Formula meeting on the persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons showed just how much more work lies ahead, but we should not be deterred by the scale of the challenge. Those two small steps felt out of reach at our most recent wrap-up session, in June (see S/PV.7479). Let us therefore seize the momentum and unity of this month and redouble our efforts to draw to a close more than four years of fighting.

We know what we can achieve when our diplomatic efforts are aligned. Last month's resolution 2231 (2015), on the Iran nuclear deal, clearly showed how a united Council, working closely with regional organizations, such as the European Union, can really make a difference. In a world of escalating threats to international peace and security, it was immensely satisfying to tackle that one. I want to pay tribute to Gerard and his team from New Zealand for their vital stewardship of that important issue through the Council.

Sadly, July also showed the dire consequences of division. We had the chance to bring justice to those tragically killed on Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. And

we had a unique moment to remember those murdered in the Srebrenica genocide and to advance the cause of reconciliation in Bosnia. On both occasions, we were denied by the actions of one Council member. That cannot continue if the Council is to retain its credibility. We faced wider challenges to our collective credibility over the past months. We cannot, and must not, shy away from the shocking allegations that emerged about sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations peacekeepers. Those horrific reports must be investigated urgently and decisively. I welcome the responsiveness of the Secretary-General in briefing the Council so quickly after the allegations emerged.

It is that responsiveness that demonstrates that the Council's impact is not always determined by its products, but also by its working methods. I applaud you, Madam, for your creative use of the item "Other business" to address issues from Burundi, to Guinea-Bissau and Burkina-Faso. I also commend you for humanizing the impact of Ebola by inviting to the Council a briefer who worked in the field. And I commend you for your dedication to agreeing to strong and clear press elements so that we may communicate our work to the world at large. Your efforts have been a welcome continuation of the steps taken by Gerard to bring more interactivity and informality to our consultations.

Let me conclude, Madam President, by welcoming the fact that you are holding this session in public. It is important that we should share our successes and be frank about our shortcomings to the widest possible audience. By working together in this way, we can help improve our effectiveness in future and tackle the challenges ahead. I look forward to doing so in the coming month under the Russian presidency.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, let me pay tribute to the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and to express my condolences to his family and loved ones.

I warmly thank Ambassador Joy Ogwu and all the Nigerian team for their work. You managed perfectly the agenda during an intensive month in the heart of a New York summer, with pragmatism, talent and a spirit of availability. I also wish to pay tribute to your mindfulness for summaries and explanations of the work done. You placed the issue of peacekeeping at the heart of your programme, thus preparing for the collective thinking that we owe the Organization for its seventieth anniversary. In particular, I will remember the excellent debate (see S/PV.7505) organized on regional organizations and contemporary challenges to global security. The recommendations of the report (see S/2015/446) of the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, as the Secretary-General stated, encourage us to strengthen partnerships, with the strict application of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, with regional organizations, in particular the Union African and the European Union.

The month of August also saw its own positive developments. Certainly, we cannot rest on our laurels, but I want to highlight several issues.

To begin with, the Council was able to reach unanimity on the Syrian dossier with the adoption of resolution 2235 (2015), which establishes an investigative mission to attribute responsibility for the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in Syria, which shows that there will be no impunity in the face of such serious crimes. That hope was extended and bolstered by the adoption of a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/15) on 17 August in support of the political process relaunched by Staffan de Mistura. Now we have that framework in place; henceforth we must not forget the situation of civilian populations who have paid too high a price in this conflict. From 18 August, air raids that struck Douma indiscriminately, with about a 100 deaths and numerous injured, remind us what the Syrian authorities are doing to their own population. As we wait for a political transition to be set up, the international community must remember that, first and foremost, States have the responsibility of providing security for their populations. France will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the protection of civilian populations against the most deadly attacks, in particular indiscriminate bombings by the regime using barrels bombs, and to ensure that a political solution, which everyone very much wants, will be set up. One does not go without the other.

I also want to speak about another development, Madam, that took place under your presidency, namely, the signing of the peace agreement on South Sudan. The presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/16) adopted on August 29 invites the parties to honour their commitments in full. That important moment, while the security and humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate, shows, if it was needed, in connection with Nigeria's general debate, the key mediating role

of regional organizations and of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in the crisis in South Sudan.

Peacekeeping, which has been the thread running through your presidency, Madam, involves the renewal of the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Through resolution 2236 (2015), we renewed the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which plays a key role in Lebanon to preserve the ceasefire. The presidential statement of 29 August on the South Sudan (S/PRST/2015/16) confirms the desire of the Council to adapt the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to implement the recently signed agreement.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the courageous action of the soldiers and personnel involved in peacekeeping. We saw this, for example, with the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to restore calm on the ground during serious armed clashes in the Kidal region, in violation of the agreements signed on 15 May and 20 June in Mali. They cannot see their reputation tarnished by abuses carried out by some of them. This month of August saw the list of allegations of sexual abuse in the Central African Republic expand. The Council was able to express its emotion and anger, and support the decisive action of the Secretary-General to implement the zero-tolerance policy. I want to assure Council members once again of the wholesale determination of France to shed light on the allegations concerning French soldiers. We want to lend our full support to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, in that painful but crucial time for the political transition in the Central African Republic.

My statement would not paint a realistic picture if I did not talk about the tense situations that civilians suffer from first and foremost. First of all, Burundi has been caught up in a spiral of violence since the elections. From now on only one thing is needed — the resumption of dialogue. However, it is lagging behind, at a risk for the worse and of regional contagion. Let us get back once again to the role of regional organizations in crisis prevention and management. That will be crucial. The East African Community is in the front line, but the African Union and the United Nations must give their support. Inaction does not equal stability, and we must do everything we can collectively and individually to bring the parties together to find agreement and a consensus-based solution. In Burundi as in other theatres of political and security crises, the inclusive nature of dialogue will be a key to a solution.

The appeal we are making also concerns Guinea-Bissau. The Council and the Peacebuilding Commission have noted an increase in tensions, steeped in obstacles for the country and its population, that might undermine the significant achievements that the country has attained since 2012. The unity of the Council and the international community sends a strong message to the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to urge them to opt for dialogue over confrontation, with the support, once again, of regional organizations, in particular the Economic Community of West African States.

In Yemen, Stephen O'Brien returned from his trip with a report and very alarming figures on the humanitarian situation in the country. France recalls that resolution 2216 (2015) urges all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law that applies. We reiterate our appeal to implement an unconditional humanitarian pause, if necessary with a monitoring mechanism, and an immediate resumption, without preconditions, of a truly inclusive inter-Yemeni dialogue, under the aegis of the Special Envoy.

Finally, on Libya, the Council has been sufficiently patient, and it is time for dialogue to happen very soon with the formation of a Government of national consensus. Otherwise, the threat of terrorism will continue to expand, and we will not be able to bring a sustained response to the migration challenges that affect the country. We are bringing our full support to the Special Envoy Bernardino León in this decisive moment, and we stand ready to bring our full force to bear to dissuade those who are intransigent and refuse to sign an agreement.

We must not forget that this month has been overshadowed by terrible bombings and terrorist attacks in several countries, including yours, Madam President, because of Boko Haram, but also in Saudi Arabia because of Daesh. Unfortunately, the list is too long. Our determination to combat the scourges of terrorism and radicalism is full-fledged. More than ever, the unity of the Council is crucial to block the fanatics. Following up from the ministerial debate of 27 March (see S/PV.7419), on 8 September France will organize a conference in Paris on the preservation of

diversity and pluralism in the Middle East. We are convinced that we cannot protect populations from the ethnic and religious violence that Daesh has made its trademark, unless States are based on the coexistence among the different groups within their communities.

On the eve of the opening of the seventieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, we note that enormous challenges face us, and the unity and mobilization of the Council for peacekeeping are more than ever crucial. August, thanks to you, Madam President, really did a kick-off under the emblem of mobilization and hope.

In conclusion, I want to warmly thank the Nigerian presidency again, and wish Russia every success. Of course Russia can count on our full support.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): I join earlier speakers in thanking you, Madam President, and the Nigerian team for the calm and collected manner in which you managed and guided the Council's work in August. We appreciate the decision to hold this wrap-up session. Mindful that New Zealand had intended to hold a similar session during its presidency of the Council, my statement will also briefly consider the Council's work in July.

We appreciate the keen focus that Nigeria sought to bring to certain issues during its presidency, including to regional organizations and to the current challenges of global security, security sector reform, Ebola and sexual violence in conflict, particularly in the Middle East region, as well as the consideration of numerous country-specific situations. In my delegation's view, August was especially productive for the Council with regard to its ongoing efforts to address the dire and dismal situation in Syria. The unanimous adoption of resolution 2235 (2015), on the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict is, in our view, an important step towards establishing accountability for the perpetrators of such vile crimes.

On a related note, Malaysia also believes that adoption of a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/15), which, inter alia, outlines the proposals by Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura on the implementation of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), presents a unique opportunity for the Council and the Syrian parties to work in better coordination while fully respecting the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and of all other affected States. We also reiterate that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict and that all parties to the conflict must abide by the relevant Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2165 (2014), which calls for immediate and unhindered access for the provision of humanitarian assistance directly to those affected by the conflict.

At the same time, Malaysia believes that the working methods with regard to that particular presidential statement could have been improved. While fully cognizant of the prerogatives of the permanent members, we are of the view that, on this particular issue, non-permanent members should have been brought on board from the outset. Looking ahead, we look forward to the operationalization of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. In that regard, we hope that the terms of reference can be speedily agreed upon.

South Sudan was another highlight in the month of August. We are greatly encouraged by the constructiveness and flexibility that led to the Council's unified stance, as reflected in presidential statement S/PRST/2015/16. The conclusion of the agreement to end hostilities by all parties to the conflict in South Sudan is an opportunity to chart a new path for the country, and we look forward to its implementation. In that regard, Malaysia reaffirms its support, alongside that of other Council members, the United Nations and other interested partners and stakeholders, for this new start for the people of South Sudan.

The theme of sexual violence in conflict was also the subject of the Council's attention in August: first in the context of allegations of sexual abuse and sexual violence by peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (see S/PV.7500), and subsequently in the closed briefing by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zainab Bangura on her recent visit to the Middle East region, during which the horrific sexual and violence and abuse suffered by women and girls in the context of ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq was brought to light, as reflected in the Security Council press statement SC/12027. On that issue, Malaysia believes that there is a further role for the Council in ensuring that such crimes not go unpunished.

The issue of terrorism and terrorist attacks continues to be a scourge on international peace and

security, as evidenced by the number of attacks that the Council has addressed in various press statements. In that connection, my delegation wishes to offer belated congratulations to Lithuania and Spain for successfully organizing and hosting the special meeting of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee held on 28 July in Madrid.

Before concluding, allow me to briefly review the Council's work in July under the presidency of New Zealand.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to once again express our highest appreciation to Ambassador Van Bohemen and the New Zealand team for their superb handling of the Council in what was a very busy month. As a non-permanent member of the Council, we greatly appreciate New Zealand's efforts to reinvigorate the Council's working methods and for taking up difficult issues, such as the veto.

The strong and unified Council position on resolution 2231 (2015), adopted under New Zealand's watch, clearly demonstrated the Council's capacity to come together. That is something we should always aspire to achieve. Indeed, the Council's unity on the Iran nuclear issue, South Sudan and the Joint Investigative Mechanism in regard to Syria demonstrates the value of dogged pursuit of diplomacy, dialogue and negotiations with a view towards making positive, and hopefully durable, contributions to international peace and security.

I take this opportunity to wish Ambassador Churkin and his team all the best in assuming the Council's presidency in September. I wish to reaffirm Malaysia's commitment to engage constructively with the presidency and all Council members with a view to discharging the Council's mandates in the most effective and efficient manner.

Finally, I also wish to express my delegation's sincere condolences on the passing away of Lieutenant General José Luiz Jaborandy, Jr., Force Commander of United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we would like to express our condolences on the death of Lieutenant General José Luiz Jaborandy, Jr., Force Commander of United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, and to extend our condolences to his family, friends and the Government of Brazil.

We would like to join others in congratulating you, Madam President, for the constructive and successful management of the work of the Security Council during the month of August and for the leadership you have shown in dealing with the complex issues that have come before us this month. This month was marked by significant events.

On 7 August, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2235 (2015), creating the Joint Investigation Mechanism between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to investigate the chlorine gas attacks in Syria. Venezuela welcomes the achievements of the Government of Syria in implementing resolution 2118 (2013) and destroying 99 per cent of its chemical weapons, now outside its territory. However, we were concerned about the recent news that chemical weapons had been used by terrorist groups. Venezuela voted in favour of resolution 2235 (2015) because we were convinced that the use of toxic chemical agents as weapons constitutes a war crime. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's letter of 27 August in which the terms of reference are set out to guide the work of the Mechanism, including the importance of maintaining close cooperation with the Government of Syria. It is our hope that the work of the Mechanism will provide an impetus for the peace process in Syria and the region.

Venezuela is committed to a political solution to the conflict in Syria and fully supports the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, in that regard. That is why my country joined the consensus in the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/15 of 17 August 2015. However, as we clearly stated, Venezuela does not subscribe to paragraphs 8 and 10 of that statement, which promote a political transition, including the establishment of a transitional Government, without the consent of the Syrian Government, which violates the sovereignty, political independence and self-determination of its people.

Our country has emphasized the need to avoid repeating the serious political mistakes made in Iraq and Libya, where the change of Government by coercion resulted in the collapse of State institutions, worsening violence in the Middle East and Africa and creating conditions for the emergence and strengthening of terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

As a non-permanent member of the Council, we demand that the undemocratic practice of excluding elected members of the Security Council from negotiations, which characterized the negotiation process of that presidential statement, cease once and for all. The unity of the Council requires the full participation of all its members in building international peace and security.

With regard to the war in Yemen, Venezuela also advocates a political and peaceful solution to the crisis in that brotherly country. In that connection, we fully support the mediation efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. We regret that, as a result of the conflict, thousands of civilians have lost their lives or been wounded, while more than 1 million people have been compelled to abandon their homes in search of shelter, as indicated by Mr. O'Brien in his various briefings. We note with deep concern the deliberate attacks by all parties to the conflict against civilians, houses, hospitals, schools and roads. We urgently call for putting an end to the indiscriminate bombings, which began on 25 March. We demand the implementation of a humanitarian pause, which has long been discussed in the Council.

Venezuela hopes that peace and security will return to South Sudan. We believe that the agreement reached between the parties to the conflict represents a major milestone in the long and complex negotiation process that has been promoted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the IGAD-plus configuration, including the United Nations and the African Union. It is now up to the leaders of South Sudan to implement the terms of the agreement, as part of an inclusive dialogue with a view to reconciliation and the rebuilding of the country. We hope that the parties to the conflict, who are now responsible for peace, will know how to live up to this historic moment and join their efforts to achieve a lasting peace.

We welcome the fact that it was African countries and their regional organizations that have been able to bear the brunt of the responsibility in the peace process. In that regard, we recall a phrase from the statement delivered by you, Madam President, during the open debate (see S/PV.7505) on regional organizations and contemporary challenges of global security of 18 August, in which you said "it is evident that the regionalization of global security is rapidly gaining remarkable momentum". The role of the United Nations should be focused on providing sustained attention and assistance to the development and strengthening of the capacities of regional organizations so that they can assume the tasks of resolving conflicts and peacekeeping on behalf of the international community. In that regard, we support the proposal to establish an ongoing cooperation mechanism between the United Nations and regional organizations that would hold regular meetings with the aim of promoting cooperation between those organizations and the United Nations.

It is also important to keep in mind the importance of having the Security Council's authorization for the operations carried out by regional organizations and coalitions in which the use of force is planned, as it is only by adhering to the Charter of the United Nations that international legitimacy can be given to the use of coercive measures.

Venezuela joins those countries that have vehemently condemned the cases of sexual abuse and violence in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We support the zero-tolerance policy in all investigations into such cases in the Central African Republic. We support all legal and administrative measures necessary to punish such unacceptable abuses against the civilian population, which must be protected and assisted by United Nations Blue Helmets.

With regard to security sector reform, the Council should have a more comprehensive discussion of the security experiences in countries that have been affected by foreign military invasions and interventions that have led to the collapse of all State institutions. The traumatic and terrible experiences that we are seeing in Iraq and Libya should lead us to think deeply about this. The collapse of institutions in those States, which is the result of foreign military intervention, and the fragmentation of society, which was used as a policy of occupation and domination of the population, including sexual and sectarian violence as a means of punishing and terrorizing sectors of the population that were accused of supporting the former regime, in addition to the terrible social and humanitarian effects of the war, have led to the terrible phenomenon of terrorism and extremism, such as ISIS and other violent groups, which today represent the main threat to peace and security throughout the entire Middle East and North African region.

In conclusion, my country wishes to draw the Council's attention to an outstanding issue on the Council's agenda: the conflict between Palestine and

the occupying Power, Israel. So long as we continue to postpone the two-State solution, we will be nurturing a culture of violence and extremism. It is urgent that the Council renew its efforts to bring about a peace process and promote a political solution to put an end to Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. We hope to welcome Palestine as a full State Member of the United Nations at the seventieth session.

Finally, we would like to wish every success to, and express our support for, the presidency of the Russian Federation of the Council during the upcoming month of September.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): Let me begin by joining colleagues and expressing our deepest condolences in connection with the passing away of the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, Lieutenant General José Luiz Jaborandy, Jr. I know that his presence and leadership will be greatly missed by all who knew and worked with him in the Mission.

In the approximately 70 years since the Security Council was first created, we and our predecessors before us have convened in various forums focused on various vulnerable populations impacted by conflict — children and armed conflict, women and peace and security. We have also taken action by adopting products aimed at protecting things — important cultural artifacts endangered by conflict in general, and the barbarity of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in particular. Even as we have acted to respond to ISIL's barbaric attacks on some of our civilization's great cultural artifacts, we had not acknowledged ISIL's gruesome targeting of people it perceived to be different, people it perceived to be gay. Last week that changed. If ancient relics deserve our focus — and they do — certainly so too do vulnerable populations being specifically targeted for stoning, torture and execution in conflict. This is not a cause of the West or a campaign of the left. To advance the protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons in conflict is to live up to our obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. To borrow the recent words of the highest court of this country, "the nature of injustice is that we may not always see it in our own times".

Fighting the injustice of human rights abuse is a cause to which all of our nations have committed. It is now time for us to both recognize what that means in its entirety and to champion it. The founders of the Organization envisioned — indeed, mandated — that the United Nations, in the words of the Charter, "be determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person". Last week, by convening, with Chile, the first discussion of the Security Council under the Arria Formula on ISIL's targeting of LGBT persons, we collectively took an important step towards realizing the Charter's ambition and living up to our responsibilities to stand up for those who are vulnerable in conflict. The first step of doing so is being willing to speak openly about it. Last week we began that important conversation.

This month we joined United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura and Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien in condemning the Al-Assad's regime's deadly air strikes against a market in Duma, a suburb of Damascus, one that came almost two years to the day after the regime used chemical weapons in the same area. The latest attack was appropriately the subject of the Council's focus, and the latest victims joined of thousands of innocent Syrians who have been killed by the Al-Assad regime's deliberate targeting of civilian areas, including mosques, schools and hospitals.

In South Sudan, we have worked together to ensure that a peace agreement was signed by the relevant parties in support of the regional efforts made in that regard. We heard from the Deputy Secretary-General, to whom we express our gratitude for his leadership, and we worked to ensure that all actors were well aware of what the Council was prepared to do if progress on advancing peace was not made.

On 26 August, due to the unified message of the international community, including the Security Council, a peace agreement the South Sudanese have been seeking for more than 20 months was finally signed. That, in and of itself, is not enough. Now begins the hard work of implementing the agreement. The Security Council must maintain the unity we have demonstrated on this issue over these past weeks and ensure that all the parties know there is only one path ahead, namely, the full implementation of the agreement that has been signed. Any derogation from this path must be met with a resolute and firm response. That is how we can collectively and best support this young nation at this critical time, as it has the chance to walk away from a bloody war.

This month we have also been confronted by multiple horrific reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers sent to protect some of the world's most vulnerable people. Those reports require us to grapple with the shortcomings in how the Organization and some of its Members deal with the problem. If zero tolerance is to mean anything, we have to change our tolerance for the results of our collective efforts thus far. There is clearly much more that needs to be done, and done urgently.

In Burundi, the United States continues to express its deep concern about the absence of any meaningful dialogue. The Government of Burundi continues to dangerously frustrate restarting an open, comprehensive dialogue. This rejection of talks, coupled with the Government's obstructions of the activities of the African Union human rights and disarmament monitors and its divisive rhetoric, is extremely dangerous. It is time for the Government of Burundi to actively de-escalate the rhetoric and begin to advance peace through dialogue. The parties concerned, including the East African Community, agree that an inclusive and comprehensive political dialogue is the only credible route to re-establishing peace and stability in Burundi.

I would like to thank you, Madam President, and your delegation for convening the 13 August briefing on Ebola (see S/PV.7502). The United States welcomes the collective efforts of the region and beyond to combat Ebola and its ongoing impact on communities across West Africa. We remain committed to getting to, and staying at, zero, as well as to helping the affected Governments rebuild and recover. We were especially moved by the briefing of Liberian epidemiologist and community activist, Dr. Mosoka Fallah, who spoke about the compassion and determination with which ordinary Liberians confronted the Ebola virus head on.

Finally, I would like to thank the Nigerian delegation for its leadership of the Security Council this month. Madam President, by my team's count, this is your fourth time at the helm of the Security Council. One would have to go back to former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's tenure as the United States Permanent Representative to find a Permanent Representative who has overseen the Council's operations as many times as you have yourself. We have benefitted from that wisdom and experience and we thank you, Madam, and the Nigerian delegation, for your leadership.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): We thank Nigeria for scheduling today's meeting and we join colleagues in expressing condolences over the passing away of the Force Commander of United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

We wish to comment today on the Security Council's work in August and in July, when we had our presidency. We see the wrap-up sessions as an opportunity to critically examine how the 15 Council members can work together more effectively to deliver better results from the broader United Nations membership that we represent.

Over the last two months, not everything has gone the way we would have liked. But we have seen some striking examples of what the Council can do when we achieve unity. The unanimous adoption of the resolution 2231 (2015) on 20 July (see S/PV.7488), endorsing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme, demonstrated this fact, on an issue of great importance to international peace and security. On 17 August, we adopted a critically important presidential statement on Syria (S/PRST/2015/15), expressing support for the United Nations Special Envoy's approach on the way forward (see S/PV.7504). It was an all too rare example of the Council coming together on an issue of the highest priority.

To achieve unity and the strongest outcomes, all 15 Council members should be able to contribute fully. Each of us has interests and perspectives that can add value. We are not naive about the dynamics that persist among permanent members and the difficulty in reaching consensus, but we believe that an inclusive approach to decision-making maximizes the chances of achieving unity and of having the Council speak with one voice.

New Zealand supports looking at how to improve the Council's decision-making practices. During our presidency, we encouraged interactive and frank discussions on a range of topics, including in informal formats outside of the United Nations. We convened a working breakfast for Permanent Representatives at the start of July and hosted a separate informal discussion where we encouraged members to speak freely about Council decision-making.

In the Consultations Room, in addition to the scheduled programme of work, we believe Council members should talk about matters as the need arises. One of the most dynamic discussions we have had since joining the Council was a discussion in July on the Secretary-General appointment process. We know

there are different views within the Council, which is one of the reasons that we raised it.

We appreciated the Secretary-General briefing members in person on his response to the latest allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. We encourage strongly such updates by the Secretary-General on issues of high importance.

One of the features we saw in July and this month has been the value of discussions under "Other matters" — for example, of Burundi and Guinea-Bissau. Some of those discussions were initiated by Council members, others by the Secretariat. We see that both as good use of the Council's time and as a way to ensure the Council's close monitoring of situations. These can become substantive discussions, and it is part of efforts to improve our working methods. We would be interested in considering how to make optimal use of the time available under "Other matters", and for there to be more transparency when topics have been raised for discussion in advance.

Finally, we congratulate you, Madam President, on your presidency. We consider the month to have been very well run and we have appreciated the tone and interactivity of the discussions. For the coming month, we wish the Russian Federation every success with its presidency.

Mr. Xu Zhongsheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates the important roles that New Zealand and Nigeria played during their presidencies of the Security Council in July and August, respectively.

With regard to the work of the Security Council, I would like to focus on three points.

First, on South Sudan, thanks to joint efforts by all parties, the parties to the conflict in South Sudan signed a peace agreement earlier this month, laying a solid foundation for the restoration of peace and stability in the country. As a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development-plus configuration, China undertook efforts to advance the peace talks by multiple means and pushed the parties concerned to meet each other half way. China sincerely hopes that the parties to the conflict in South Sudan will honour their commitments, achieve a ceasefire, stop the violence and fully implement the agreement. China stands ready to work with all sides to actively support the South Sudan peace process and continue to make unremitting efforts for lasting peace and stability in South Sudan.

Secondly, with regard to Syria, the Security Council recently adopted resolution 2235 (2015), on the question of chemical weapons in Syria (see S/PV.7501), as well as a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/15) on the Syrian political process (see S/PV.7504). China welcomes those developments. China consistently believes that on the Syrian question the international community must adhere to an approach towards a political solution, respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, honour the Syrian people's right to decide on the future of their own country, and support the Syrian people's efforts to advance an inclusive political process on the basis of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex). China will continue to vigorously support the Syrian political process and the mediation efforts by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Envoy, Mr. De Mistura, and actively contribute to an early, comprehensive, lasting and proper solution of the Syrian question.

Thirdly, on relevant African questions, the Security Council has recently held multiple rounds of deliberations on hotspot issues and thematic agenda items on Africa. China believes that the international community should respect the wishes of the countries of Africa and fully support the peace efforts of the African Union (AU) and other regional organizations. The Security Council should give priority to supporting the role of the AU in solving regional issues. As always, China believes that the challenges and difficulties that some African regions face will not hold back Africa on its path towards peace, development and progress. As an unwavering friend and partner of Africa, China is ready to work with African countries and the international community in continuing to contribute actively to the continent's peace, stability, development and prosperity.

Lastly, China would like to wish the Russian Federation every success in its presidency of the Council for next month. We trust that under its leadership the Security Council's work will achieve positive results.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank you, Madam President, and the entire Nigerian delegation, for your capable leadership of the Security Council in August, and we would also like to express our appreciation for the work of the New Zealand presidency in July. We would also like to join the rest in offering our condolences for the sudden death of the Brazilian peacemaker.

We have done a pretty good job this month. We gave a great deal of attention to the Middle East and North Africa. Sadly, the state of affairs there leaves much to be desired. The region is unstable, there are bloody conflicts everywhere and the prospects for solving them are dim. In August we have traditionally tried to tackle the still unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose risks of increasing tension and radicalization. The uncertainty of the situation around the Gaza Strip compounds the continued absence of intra-Palestinian unity.

Unfortunately, the situation in Libya also remains extremely problematic. The gross violations by some Council members of the Security Council resolutions on Libya adopted in 2011 continue to result in serious damage with new and tragic effects. One such is the recent wave of illegal immigrants attempting to flee the chaos of Libya for the shores of Europe. Despite the cautious optimism expressed last week (see S/PV.7512) by Mr. Bernadino León, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, regarding the prospects of the work being done on a political agreement, there are many reasons for concern. The longer the State continues its collapse, the more that will be exploited by terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). They continue to expand their presence on Libyan soil.

We had a detailed discussion of Yemen, where violent clashes continue and the humanitarian situation is worsening. Civilians are dying almost daily. Yesterday it was reported that a single air strike killed at least 13 people. There is currently no light visible at the end of that tunnel. We urge that the bloodshed cease immediately and call on all sides to adopt a constructive attitude in the negotiations being conducted under the the auspices of Ismail Ahmed, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

The issue of Syria was once again a major item on the Council's agenda. It was encouraging that we were able to adopt several important documents, including a political statement by the President of the Security Council on Syria (S/PRST/2015/15) urging Syrians to engage urgently with the diplomatic efforts of Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. On 7 August we adopted resolution 2235 (2015), which establishes the Joint Investigative Mechanism on incidents involving the use of toxic chemicals in Syria, which we hope will work professionally and impartially. That is particularly important in view of the fact that, as the Council's work on this subject has shown, various members of the Council are prepared to shield terrorists in pursuit of their own political aims. We are concerned about recent reports on the growing numbers of cases in the region where ISIL fighters have been using not only toxic chemicals such as chlorine but also chemical warfare agents and mustard gas in particular. There is evidence that ISIL has been given access to the relevant technical documentation and has been attracting experts from abroad to work on synthesizing such agents in labs on territory they have captured. The nature and extent of the threats emanating from ISIL and other terrorist organizations have reached unacceptable levels.

At the same time, in just the past few days, and after the adoption of resolution 2235 (2015), on the establishment of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, there have been reports of ISIL's increasing use of chemical weapons in Syria's neighbour Iraq. Any failure to attend to such incidents is both unacceptable and extremely dangerous. In that regard, the Russian delegation believes the Security Council should adopt a draft resolution extending the mechanism's mandate to Iraq, and we have begun working on that. We believe that such a resolution is urgent, even if it represents only one brick in the wall needed for a foundation for settling the region's worst problems, which have left a number of countries in the Middle East and North Africa facing real threats to their territorial integrity. The proliferating conflicts fuel the potential risks of terrorism. ISIL's fighters are trying to bring ever greater expanses of territory under the control of their quasi-State.

It has become ever more critical that we undertake a comprehensive analysis of the nature of the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa with the aim of deciding the direction of our collective work on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations. We must find the common denominators and form a shared understanding of both the reasons for the current massive security crisis in the region and the political and other factors that are compounding it. That is the only way that the international community, with the Security Council playing a key role, can achieve the measures agreed on for preventing the region's growing potential for conflict and terrorist activity. On 30 September we plan to hold an open debate at the ministerial level on the subject "Maintenance of international peace and security: settling conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and the fight

against the terrorist threat in the region". Based on its conclusions, we plan to adopt a draft presidential statement highlighting the urgent measures we need to take to resolve and end the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as possible further steps for mitigating the risks of terrorism in the region. We are hoping for the broad participation of Member States at a high level. We believe the topic's relevance has been fully affirmed by the work of the Council in August, in which we have attempted to unravel the Middle East's knotty problems strand by separate strand. That experience has shown that we can restore the region only through a comprehensive approach on a firm basis of international law, without double standards and founded on the prerogatives of the Security Council.

In conclusion, I would like to express our thanks to all the members who have promised their support to the Russian presidency of the Council for the month of September.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): Before I begin my statement, on behalf of the delegation of Chad, I would like to offer our sincere condolences to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations as a whole, the Government of Brazil and the bereaved family of General José Luiz Jaborandy, Jr.

I would first like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your and your team's excellent leadership of the Council for the month of August. I would also like to thank you for organizing this meeting under presidential note S/2010/507. The month of August has been very busy and all the scheduled meetings, along with many others dictated by circumstances dictated, were appropriately held, a fact that we welcome.

We noted with satisfaction that under the Nigerian presidency the Council adopted by consensus resolution 2235 (2015), creating the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations designed to identify persons and entities in the Syrian conflict who may be using chemical weapons or products, including chlorine and other toxic substances. In view of the fact that the civilian population of Syria continues to be the target of attacks involving such banned weapons and substances, this resolution is of major importance.

On 17 August the Council also unanimously adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/15) in support of the initiative of Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, aimed at launching political negotiations around the four areas covered by the corresponding working groups. The efforts of Mr. De Mistura should be unreservedly supported with a view to helping the parties to the conflict to end hostilities and engage in a peaceful political process. There is no military solution to the Syrian crisis. We welcome the adoption of the presidential statement, even though we regret the lack of transparency surrounding the drafting of the document without the involvement of the Council's non-permanent members. In that connection, we share the concerns expressed by some delegations with regard to such exclusions and stress the need for cohesion in the Council beyond its members' status, two thirds of whom are guided by the mandate of the General Assembly.

This month, the Security Council also considered the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security (see S/PV.7505). Regional organizations are uniquely suited to addressing the multifaceted threats to international peace and security. We look forward to the African Union remaining a strategic partner. It must receive the support it deserves. Moreover, we believe that relations between the African Union and the United Nations have not yet reached the desired strategic level, and we stress the need to support the African Union in its efforts to complement the work of the United Nations through sustainable, predictable and more flexible funding.

On 13 August, the Council also considered the Ebola virus pandemic (see S/PV.7502). We recall that the epidemic that ravaged the three most affected countries — Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone — was a real threat to the entire planet, as it affected many other countries, including countries outside Africa. We welcome the international community's consistent mobilization to address the pandemic, and we call on it to provide all the necessary support to the countries most affected in order to stem the disastrous socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic on their development.

The Council also addressed security sector reform in post-conflict countries (see S/PV.7508). We emphasize that United Nations support for security sector reform is essential; however, national ownership and the priorities of the country concerned, depending on its particular needs, must be taken into account. The Council must also improve its interaction with the African Union, which has already established a

strategic framework on security sector reform, so as to better assist African States.

Furthermore, we note that the Council adopted a presidential statement on South Sudan (S/PRST/2015/16) following the signing of the peace agreement by all of the parties concerned. Chad welcomes the signing of the agreement and calls upon all signatory parties to implement it in good faith in order to end the suffering of the people of South Sudan.

Libya, Guinea Bissau and the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, among others, were also the subject of Council consultations. The security and humanitarian situation in Libya remains a source of great concern, and the lack of a solution to the political and institutional crisis not only affects the future of that country but also threatens security and stability throughout the Sahel owing to the terrorist and criminal activities developing there. We call upon the United Nations to work closely with the African Union and the League of Arab States to bring all Libyan stakeholders to participate consistently in the political process in order to silence the weapons and ensure a Government of national unity in the country.

The institutional crisis in Guinea Bissau is also alarming. The international community must make every effort to support efforts along the difficult path towards a democratic process, as well as the momentum towards socioeconomic recovery and the reforms needed to ensure the country's lasting stability. In that regard, we call for respect for the Constitution of the country, and we underscore the need for the army to stay out of the crisis.

The Palestinian crisis is, as usual, at an impasse, without a glimmer of hope for the Palestinian people under occupation. We reiterate that the status quo is not an option. The international community must assume its responsibilities in finding a lasting solution to the conflict, which has lasted too long.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our congratulations to you, Madam President, and to the entire Nigerian team, for your outstanding work, the relevant topics that you have addressed and your excellent conduct of the Council's work this month. I also take this opportunity to wish every success to the entire team of the Russian Federation on its assumption of the presidency for the month of September, and we wish to assure it of the support of the Chadian delegation.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to join others in expressing our condolences over the passing away of the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

I thank you, Madam President, and your team for your successful conduct of the work of the Security Council during the month of August. Allow me to address the following specific points.

The Nigerian presidency has focused on the same issues this past month as did in April 2014, during its prior presidency of the Council, including security sector reform. We believe that has effectively contributed to the follow-up on the subject and has ensured the Council's effective involvement in, and a review of, the practical implementation of its resolutions on the subject. It is our hope that this will become a recurrent method on the part of those members that are provided the opportunity to preside over the Council for more than one month.

The complicated conflicts and humanitarian, security and political situations of the past decades have regrettably led to the fact that issues in our region have taken up a large part of the Council's agenda, without any real progress in their consideration, particularly regarding the question of Palestine, which represents the core of the conflict in the Middle East. We reiterate the need for the Council to shoulder its moral and legal responsibilities in order to help the Palestinian people to achieve their legitimate right to live in freedom and dignity in an independent State.

Concerning the Syrian conflict, we welcome the unity of purpose in the Council, as exemplified by the adoption of the important presidential statement S/PRST/2015/15, in support of the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, towards a political solution based on the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), as well as the adoption of resolution 2235 (2015), which establishses the Joint Investigative Mechanism to address the use of chemical weapons in Syria. However, we wish to stress that unity is not merely about the Council adopting a resolution or a presidential statement. Unity is also about the working methods of the Security Council, in particular when it comes to the adoption of such products. We also stress that the Security Council should not concentrate merely on the political or security issues related to the Syrian crisis. It should also focus on the humanitarian ones — in the light of

the serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Syria — as well as the grave, unprecedented repercussions on neighbouring countries, owing in particular to the outflow of Syrian refugees.

It is very important that the Security Council remain informed about all of those issues in the Middle East. We believe that the Security Council resolutions and its meetings with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict provide a useful opportunity for members of the Council to learn more about the plight of civilians in Syria and Iraq, as well as about violations of human rights.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the delegation of the Russian Federation on its assumption of the presidency of the Council next month, and we pledge our full support and cooperation.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Along with the other delegations, I would like to express my condolences to the family of the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), whom I had the honour to know. I extend my condolences to the family of General Jaborandy, to Brazil and to all of the MINUSTAH staff in general.

I would also like to commend you, Madam President, for the outstanding manner in which you have led the Security Council during the month of August, which is not always an easy month.

I would like to refer, first of all, to the relations between the Secretary Council and the General Assembly and the efforts that we have made to improve them. Secondly, I would like to highlight the lessons learned during these past two months — and I think there are three lessons.

The presidencies of both Nigeria and New Zealand made great efforts with regard to relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Under the New Zealand presidency, I would characterize as exemplary the debate on the process of electing the Secretary-General, which affects not only the Security Council but also the General Assembly. Turning to the Nigerian presidency, I recall the constant efforts of the President — at the end of each meeting — to pull together the common threads of the discussion for presentation to the press. I think that is a fundamental task for all presidencies, and I hope that, when Spain assumes the presidency of the Council, that will also be our approach. As to working methods, the issue is fundamental. During our presidency in October, therefore, Spain will organize a debate on that subject. We are working intensively with Angola to prepare that debate, and we are confident that it will have a very satisfactory outcome.

I said that I was going to come back to the lessons learned over these past two months. The first pertains to the unity of the Council, the second to prevention, or the preventive tasks of the Council, and the third to the relevance of addressing new threats. With regard to the first lesson learned, namely, the unity of the Council — and many have said this before me — it would not have been possible without that unity to adopt four absolutely fundamental decisions. The first of those was the nuclear agreement with Iran — resolution 2231 (2015). The second was the adoption of resolution 2235 (2015), on Syria. And the third was the support given to Special Envoy De Mistura via presidential statement S/PRST/2015/15. Fourthly, the agreement with South Sudan would not have been possible without everyone having been on the same wavelength.

Concerning the second lesson learned — I am referring to the preventive action of the Secretary-General — I think that we can be proud of the way in which the Council reacted in a deft and effective manner to the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, the electoral process in Burkina Faso and the situation in Myanmar. The preventive function of the Council, which I need not point out, is absolutely fundamental for maintaining our credibility.

Finally, there is the importance of being innovative and of addressing new threats to peace and security. As a preview to that innovation, I will mention the activities undertaken by Spain on climate change under the Arria Formula — those are subjects that are not frequently discussed in the Security Council — and the open debate that I had the honour of organizing with New Zealand in relation to small island developing States (see S/PV.7499). I think that the Security Council should be ahead of the curve and decisively address such new threats. Accordingly, I would like to focus on the last 60 days — which have marked an unprecedented success — when, for the first time in history, the Security Council took up the particular vulnerability of people belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Clearly, it is also important that the Council discuss sexual violence in conflict, as that has become a constant tactic of war, particularly in crises such as those in Syria and Iraq.

Spain will follow closely all of those new threats. In that context, we will count on the cooperation of the United Kingdom in paying particular attention to resolution 1325 (2000) and the numerous aspects addressed in that very important resolution. Many of them have not yet been sufficiently implemented or analyzed by members of the Council, or by the Organization in general.

In conclusion, I would like express my full support for the upcoming presidency of the Russian Federation, as well as to commend the presidency of Nigeria. In all sincerity, I think that each presidency gives the best of itself, and I think that, on the topic of working methods, each of us is laying an additional brick in the wall that we are trying to build for us all.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): On this last day of your presidency, Madam President, I would like to thank you for your wise stewardship of the Security Council during the month of August.

I would like also to join my delegation's voice to the condolences that have been expressed with regard to the tragic death of the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, to his family and to all those who knew him and will suffer that loss.

I shall try to touch upon two thematic issues that link both the July and the August activities of the Council: the aspect of prevention and the aspect of accountability.

While the work of the Council is often constrained by mandate cycles, and most of the open debates that we organize are held on a certain number of important issues, New Zealand's open debate (see S/PV.7499) on the peace and security challenges facing small island developing States (SIDS) was, in my opinion, a welcome breath of fresh air. We hope that the Council's engagement with SIDS regarding the specific security challenges those countries are facing will continue, that it will include follow-up and that the rare opportunity for preventive action will not be missed by the Council on such crucial challenges as managing the effects of climate change, climate-induced displacement and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, among others.

A sharper focus on prevention is more urgent than ever. The Council's close monitoring of the situations in Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, Burkina-Faso and Myanmar goes in that direction. While not all of our signals have been heard by the political actors on the ground, the very fact that the Council follows such situations closely puts it in a better position to react quickly and effectively, if and when needed. However, that is not enough. The Council should take advantage of more opportunities, and more substantive steps need to be taken in prevention in general. I look forward to that issue being developed by the presidencies that will follow until the end of the current year, and beyond. Although we will no longer be members of the Security Council in 2016, Lithuania will of course follow with keen interest issues relating to prevention.

At the beginning of this month, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2235 (2015), which establishes the Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria of the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which will be mandated to identify those responsible for attacks involving chemical weapons. That is an important step, albeit only the first, towards establishing accountability in that country. That is indispensable if we are truly committed to stamping out the use of chemical weapons everywhere once and for all. We thank the Secretary-General for his recommendations with regard to the establishment of the Mechanism, and we urge the Council to go ahead with full support for that body and its activities.

Besides that particular mechanism, however, impunity certainly reigns elsewhere. Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura's briefing on sexual violence in the Middle East (see S/PV.7428) reminded us of that in the starkest possible terms. Justice and accountability cannot be relegated to some time later, because, for many of those affected, that "some time later" may never come. Tackling impunity is crucial, be it in Syria, Darfur, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Iraq, Yemen or any other conflict area where crimes against humanity, war crimes and serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law have been perpetrated. Whoever the perpetrators may be, holding them to account would contribute to reconciliation and healing, build stronger foundations for peace and ensure justice for the victims. Importantly, it would also send a strong deterrent message to would-be rapists, marauders and murderers.

In that respect, my delegation was profoundly disappointed with the outcome of the votes last July on the draft resolutions on Srebrenica and on establishing

an international tribunal on the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. Vetoing resolutions that address the issue of justice and accountability is an affront to the memories of the victims of those crimes and to the pain of their families. It also, dangerously, sends a very wrong signal on how we deal with issues of accountability and impunity.

On the other hand, the situation in July concerning those two vetoes only highlights the urgency of addressing the Council's use of the veto. Today, other delegations preceding me spoke about that. We appreciate the fact that the New Zealand presidency organized an informal discussion on the topic in July. Lithuania supports such efforts, the political statement on the suspension of the veto in case of mass atrocities presented by France and Mexico, as well as discussions on a code of conduct developed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group.

On the issue of accountability, the Council should certainly remain strongly and continuously engaged on the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers. If ignored, such abuses will continue undercutting the credibility of United Nations peacekeeping, and of the United Nations itself. The problems certainly did not start with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. It keeps reappearing ever so often. If we remember, back in 2006, in the wake of a sexual exploitation scandal in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, said,

> "We dishonour these brave men and women when we fail to prevent or punish those from within their ranks who victimize the very people peacekeepers are meant to protect and serve." (*S/PV.5379, p. 3*)

Several thousand peacekeepers have died in the line of duty over the years — let us remember that. Peacekeeping missions are becoming more and more complex and dangerous. Many peacekeepers and civilian staff serve in truly difficult conditions, of which I had a glimpse myself last week during a trip to the Central African Republic. To serve under such conditions takes endurance and commitment. It is therefore even more imperative that justice be done, in the interests of those thousands of peacekeepers and mission staff who serve with dedication, by going with full force after those few transgressors who have used a peacekeeping mission to transform it from its role of protector to that of predator. While the United Nations does not have the authority to prosecute crimes of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by peacekeepers, it can certainly do more to promote a climate of accountability in other ways by building a durable, pervasive culture of accountability from top to bottom and from bottom to top.

We welcome the strong position that the Secretary-General has taken on the matter, and we hope that a zero-tolerance policy, which we so often preach, will finally become a fact rather than just a mere expression. We also hope that the Council does not have to meet again to debate the shameful behaviour of a few peacekeepers 10 years from now.

Mr. Casimiro (Angola): We, too, take this opportunity to join other Security Council members in expressing our sincere condolences to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and to the Brazilian Government and its people for the demise of the Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

Allow me, at the outset, to commend the delegation of Nigeria for an efficient and productive presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. We continued to face significant challenges this month, and I wish to commend you, Mrs. Ogwu, for your poise and professionalism in guiding the work of the Council during August 2015.

I would like to focus my remarks for today's wrap-up session on the open debate on regional organizations and on contemporary challenges to global security and the subsequent briefing on security sector reforms. As we mentioned during the debate on the role of regional organizations (see S/PV.7505), it is certain that global, continental and subregional cooperation are critical to the achievement of international peace and security and sustainable development. We are all aware that security issues cannot be tackled by one organization alone, particularly in Africa. Somalia represents an example of productive collaboration, while in South Sudan much more has to be done.

The ability of a united Security Council to meet its heavy responsibilities would be greatly improved if we had better arrangements with regional organizations. Therefore, continuous and increased engagement, interaction and consultation between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the African Union, are crucial to developing a shared

understanding of the root causes of conflicts, and to establishing appropriate prevention and response mechanisms. Efforts to strengthen both long-term and quick-reaction capacity to address emerging threats in Africa are essential, including the operationalization of the African Union's African Standby Force. That would enable the reinforcement of conflict-resolution capacities on the continent and further support the operations of the United Nations.

In 2013 the African Union launched the process for establishing an implementation mechanism for the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises. While the technical aspects of that are not yet fully defined, we believe that, with the support of African States and United Nations States Members, that mechanism would add much value to efforts to deal with current and future threats to international peace and security. To date, the threats of foreign terrorist fighters, maritime insecurity, organized crime, illegal migration, climate change and energy issues, among others, have shown us that our primary objective must remain strengthening regional bodies that can address those issues.

Key elements for sustainable development include security sector reform based on national ownership, and the prerequisite that a legal framework for national capacity be built through cooperation with the United Nations. While there have been cases of successful security sector reform, such as in Timor-Leste, Liberia and Sierra Leone, too many States still have fragile security structures, which can threaten the security and stability of their neighbours.

In that regard, we applaud the signing of the agreement on 26 August by South Sudan President Salva Kiir to resolve the conflict in that country. We are of the view that the Security Council needs to quickly update the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in order to support the implementation of some of the key tasks in the agreement. We commend the work done by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as the recently expanded efforts of the IGAD-plus arrangement, including the United Nations and the friends of South Sudan from Africa and abroad, to develop and achieve a comprehensive solution that establishes conditions for delivering peace to South Sudan.

Last but not least, we must address the situation in the Middle East, which continues to be plagued by an escalation of conflicts. Groups associated with Al-Qaida, such as Daesh, continue to spread their violent extremist ideology and actions across the region. In Syria, for example, the Council has not succeeded in influencing the parties at war to agree on the elements of a political solution. With the destruction of the education and health systems and other basic services, we have to wonder how many traumatized children will be recruited by radical groups. It is therefore important that we continue to support humanitarian efforts, which aim to deliver aid to the millions of people in need, but we must also push for a political solution to the fractious conflict. We reiterate our willingness to work with international partners on devising new strategies for dealing with violent extremism, which has an impact on so many civilians, including women and children as well as religious and ethnic minorities, throughout the region.

Finally, let us continue to work for unity within the Council in order to promote real and lasting political solutions to the many current conflicts threatening our collective peace and security.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of Nigeria.

I, too, want to lend my voice to those who have expressed condolences on the death of General José Luiz Jaborandy, Jr., of Brazil. As Force Commander of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, he demonstrated astute leadership and contributed significantly to the achievement of the Mission's mandate.

I want to take my colleagues back to 1599, when Shakespeare wrote in the play *Julius Caesar* that the eye sees not itself but by reflection. Today in 2015, it is not any different. My delegation believes that periodic reflection on the work of the Security Council can contribute significantly by either shaping or modifying the Council's response to the issues under our purview. That is why we have convened this public wrap-up session.

In July, the Council presidency of New Zealand was as innovative as it was bold. New Zealand built a foundation for the discussion of issues that are not so commonplace on the agenda of the Council. We thank them for providing valid points of departure.

During our presidency, we have sought to focus attention on three key issues that we considered not

only of contemporary significance, but also especially interlocking and interdependent. We convened a briefing that took up the international response to the Ebola outbreak (see S/PV.7502); another briefing aimed at giving practical effect to resolution 2151 (2014), the first stand-alone resolution on security sector reform (SSR) (see S/PV.7508); and an open debate on the role of regional and subregional organizations in addressing contemporary security challenges (see S/PV.7505).

Let me commend the Council for the focused attention given to the debate on Ebola. We believe that it offered an opportunity to highlight the roles of various stakeholders in mobilizing a global, rapid, coordinated and sustained response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. In the words of Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, the "world has learned from the Ebola experience." *(S/PV.7502, p. 3)* It is our hope that we will use what we have learned to collectively improve our response to future outbreaks of pandemics. In our view, the debate was successful in underscoring the need for sustained engagement with the countries most affected by the virus. As the world tries to bring the rate of Ebola virus transmission to zero, the international community must remain vigilant and ensure sustained technical, operational and financial support to the affected countries.

On security sector reform (see S/PV.7508), Council delegations affirmed that the successful implementation of resolution 2151 (2014) would ultimately depend on improved coordination of efforts within the United Nations system and between the United Nations and the relevant stakeholders. States have the primary responsibility for their own security within their borders. They must therefore endeavour to provide the political leverage needed to facilitate the required external support in meeting specific SSR targets.

The discussion on regional organizations underscored the importance of utilizing the comparative advantages of the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Regional organizations have demonstrated their relevance through preventive diplomacy, mediation and other collaborative efforts. Specialist regional knowledge, which is invaluable in conflict resolution, can be provided by regional organizations by virtue of their in-depth knowledge of regional actors and their sensitivities to local, historical and cultural factors. As strategies for placing more emphasis on the role of regional and subregional organizations evolve, it is important to periodically assess our options so as to give a more central role to those entities. Let me commend the Member States that participated in the open debate. I believe that their contributions greatly enriched our debate.

The overarching principle of our thematic debates during the past month underscored the imperative of collective action in the maintenance of international peace and security. States must collaborate with regions, which in turn must collaborate with the United Nations. Nigeria is greatly concerned about recent occurrences that have been revealed in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic, in particular the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. The briefing by the Secretary-General on 13 August on the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by peacekeeping personnel in that country was quite sobering. The Council's response underscored the imperative for the highest standards of conduct to be upheld in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We must remain steadfast in our support of the Secretary-General as he investigates those allegations. We count on the relevant troop- and police-contributing countries to offer the needed support in this investigative process.

As we reflect on the trouble spots across Africa, the Middle East and Asia, and particularly Burma, as we did on Friday, it is clear that nation-building is greatly impeded by sectionalism and ethnicity. The lack of inclusiveness often breeds dissent and conflict. My experience is that we tend to employ a fire-fighting approach to conflicts. Is it not possible for the Council to develop theoretical perspectives, or, indeed, a context in which we can all place those patterns of conflict, and thus provide the best opportunity for strategic solutions? Is that possible?

Even more significant, I would like to urge the Council to firmly establish what I have often referred to as the cause-and-effect relationship between the dire humanitarian situations that we confront in areas of conflict and the political process. Yes, we are right — Mr. O'Brien has briefed us many times in the Council this month — about our feeling of urgency on humanitarian issues. But if we continue to diverge on what gives effect to a humanitarian situation, I believe we cannot succeed. Let us together treat the symptoms as well as the causes. We tend to treat symptoms rather than causes. We must address the root causes of conflict.

I would like to end where I began, by offering the wisdom of Shakespeare. On the matter of unity in dealing with political situations, in Act I, Scene i, Shakespeare said in *Henry VI, Part II*, "Join we together, for the public good".

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Before I adjourn the meeting, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of August — I hope — I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of Nigeria to the members of the Council, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives and their respective staffs, as well as to the entire secretariat of the Council, for all the support they have offered to us. Quite unexpectedly, it has been a very busy month — and one during which we all rallied to consensus on several issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone. Thanks to God, we were not isolated. Without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and of the representatives of the Secretariat, as well as other relevant Conference Services Officers, it would have been difficult.

As we end our presidency at midnight, I know that I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of the Russian Federation every good fortune as it assumes the presidency during the month of September.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.